

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF OLD SOMERBY PARISH COUNCIL
Held Tuesday 20 May 2025 7pm at the Fox and Hounds Old Somerby

PRESENT: Cllrs Vicky Lowndes (Chairman), Cllr Nigel Percy (Vice Chairman), Cllr Vron Stephens and Cllr Peter Burrows.

Also present Parish Clerk David Holmes and 8 members of the public.

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN and signing of the declaration of Acceptance of Office.
Only one nomination was put forward – Cllr Vicky Lowndes which was carried unanimously.
Cllr Lowndes signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

2. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRMAN: Proposed by Cllr Stephens that Cllr Percy be re-elected.
Carried unanimously.

3. SUSPENSION OF THE MEETING TO ALLOW FOR THE CHAIRMAN'S REMARKS AND A 15 MINUTE PUBLIC FORUM.

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and the following issues were raised by members of the public. **a)** The footpath in front of the new 6 Bungalow site on School Lane. The Clerk explained that issue will be discussed more thoroughly later in the meeting at item 8; **b)** The provision of Fibre to the Village. The Clerk commented on a recent email from Quickline concerning the provision of full fibre broadband locally. That seemed a long way off for Old Somerby. **ACTION:** Clerk to contact EE to enquire as to progress. Cllr Percy indicated that as Cold Harbour was nearer the Cabinet Box at the Roundabout the speed was better there.

4. APOLOGIES and consideration of any reasons given. The Clerk had visited Cllr Betty North who had given her apologies due to ill health. The explanation was accepted and the Chairman would visit and send the Councillors best wishes.

5. DECLARATIONS OF PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND DISPENSATIONS: None were declared.

6. REVIEW OF OTHER APPOINTMENTS AND EXISTING POLICIES. a) Lead Councillor Finance: Cllr Peter Burrows was unanimously re-appointed. **b) Internal Auditor:** Nick Craft was very happy to continue in post and he was unanimously re-appointed. The Chairman thanked Nick for his invaluable work in this respect. Nick does not take a fee; **c) Code of Conduct** The Clerk reported that the SKDC had not made any changes to their code. This parish Council had historically adopted that code. **AGREED** no action needed. **d) Model Standing Orders:** The Clerk reported that there had been an updates of a minor nature. **AGREED** the Clerk would circulate the amendments to Cllrs for them to amend their copies.
The Clerk made mention of the volunteers who look after the Dog Bins in the village, the litter pickers who regularly pick litter to keep the area tidy and the volunteers who look after the two troughs on the Main Road without charge to the Parish Council. **The Cllrs expressed on behalf of the Councillors their grateful thanks to the volunteers for all they do for the village.**

7. APPROVAL OF DRAFT MINUTES: The draft minutes of the meeting held 8 April 2025 had been circulated to Cllrs and they were accepted unanimously as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8. CLERK AND COUNCILLORS ACTIONS AND UPDATES:

a) Invicta 6 Bungalow Site: The Clerk gave an update. He had been into touch with both the SKDC and LCC Planning Officers. The LCC Officer had said that the construction of the footpath is the responsibility of the Developer but they needed the relevant Highways Agreement. The same applies to the Give Way sign. The Developer has not yet requested them. A Resident pointed out that the footpath in its unfinished state is a hazard to anyone using it. (the alternative is to use the footpath opposite but then it entails people crossing over a very busy and blind bend) . The road inside the development is a matter for the Developer.

AGREED: the clerk to contact the Area Manager LCC and point out the unacceptable delays and ask for his intervention and bring pressure to bear upon the Developer. The Clerk also to check what conditions were imposed by SKDC and LCC upon the initial approval of the development.

b) Hazard signs on first bend into the village from the Roundabout: The clerk reported good news. LCC had agreed to replace them.

c) Community Emergency Plan; The Clerk reported that he and Cllr Percy had made good progress with the plan. It was agreed that the Church Warden Len Watson should be invited to join the group.

d) Traveller Site Cold Harbour; Cllr Percy reported that there were issues in that more Traveller Vans had been put on site than were permitted. Other requirements including a Day Room etc have not been erected.

e) The Piece of Land in Middle Path; The Clerk reported the issue is now with the solicitors and progress seems slow. He is chasing it up. Insurance cover would be investigated.

ACTION; The Clerk.

f) Renewal of 30 MPH Signs around the Village; The Chairman had initiated this action as current signs required replacements. The Clerk had progressed the issue and expected 10 new signs soon from LCC. 6 would be free replacements and 6 had been paid for;

g) The Resident's Appeal against the Parish Council;

An email was recently received from the Information Commissioner referring to the appeals by a Resident.

The Resident had appealed against the Information Commissioner's decision **dated 13 March 2024**. The IC decision was:

"that the requests (made to this Parish Council) were vexatious, and the Parish Council was therefore entitled to refuse them under section 14 of FOIA . The IC did not require the Council to take any steps".

On the 9 April, 2024, the Resident then appealed to the First Tribunal against that decision by the IC. The case title was listed as **Charles Welsh v The Information Commissioner (2025) UKFTT 214 (GRC) – The case reference being FT/EA/2024/0135.**

On the 21 February 2025 The First Tier Tribunal, before a Judge and 2 members, **Dismissed that Appeal.**

On 21 March 2025 the Resident lodged an application for **permission to appeal that decision to the Upper Tribunal** on four grounds.

On the 2 April 2025 the Judge refused the application for leave to appeal to the Upper Tribunal.

Note:

Old Somerby Parish Council held an Internal Review on 9 October, 2023.

The Resident was informed that *"the Council must warn you that it will not respond to further requests for information from you in relation to the historical and current allegations of collusions and wrongdoing being made by you and it will not respond to further requests that continue to suggest that the council is not complying with its legal duties that appear to be part of a campaign of bullying, harassment and abuse towards Councillors, the Clerk and Internal Auditor. We will not write to you to refuse these requests"*.

GARAGES IN MIDDLE PATH: _The Clerk was asked to arrange an on-site meeting.

9. LOCAL COUNCILLORS UPDATES: Cllr Sarah Trotter was unable to attend as she had another engagement. Whilst Cllr Vernon was not present it was noted she had been re-elected in the recent County Council Elections.

10. FINANCE:

a) To Consider the Finance Update: The Clerk circulated the latest update which had been signed off by the Internal Auditor Nick Craft and the Lead Councillor Finance Cllr Burrows. The Finance Update was accepted by the Councillors and the Clerk to publish it with these minutes. The Clerk referred to a recent re-evaluation of the Parish Councils Assets which had been based upon the latest evaluation by the Insurers. The re-evaluation had been agreed with Cllr Burrows and Nick Craft. It was accepted unanimously. Copy to be attached to this minutes and published. **ACTION The Clerk.**

b) The Councillors were then required to consider the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) as required by the External Auditors, PKF Littlejohn. The forms were each considered by the Councillors and then signed off by the Chairman and Clerk. **They will all be published in the Parish from 3 June until 14 July 2025 on local notice boards and on the website.**

c) Parish Clerk's expenses. The expenses of the clerk for the last financial year had been signed off by Cllr Burrows. They amounted to £407.23. There is no petty cash system in operation by the council so the clerk expends his own money for stationery, postage, printing materials etc and then claims it back. He is not paid a salary by choice.

11. PLANNING:

a) 6 School Lane, Old Somerby S25/0682: This application relates **a)** to the demolition of an existing timber lean-to and conversion of single storey side extension **b)** rear single storey rear extension. The clerk reported he had visited. There were no objections from neighbour at No. 7 but he had been unable to contact No.5. The Councillors had no Representations or Objections to this application.

b) The Conifers, School Lane, Old Somerby S25/0553. This first application relates to Dormers to be added either side of an existing room previously built onto this bungalow. The clerk had recently visited and the addition now of the Dormers had raised objections of loss of privacy from one neighbour. The neighbours on the other side had no objections. It was noted that it is proposed that the windows in both Dormers would have frosted glass. Nevertheless, the Councillors still had real concerns about the likelihood of loss of privacy.

S25/0588 This application related to the erection of a single storey rear extension to form a sun room at the same property. The work had already been commenced but following a visit from an officer of the Planning Enforcement Team the applicant had been advised to cease building and apply for permission. The Councillors had no representations to make in that regard.

ACTION: The Clerk - to inform SKDC Planners of the Councillors' comments for both applications.

12. CORRESPONDENCE INCLUDING ITEMS FOR INFORMATION ONLY:

a) News of free events for parents to support children to stay safe on-line had been published by the Clerk on the Village Facebook page.

b) Information of Local Government Re-Organisation had been received by the clerk and a copy is attached to these Minutes. A copy will also be published on the Village Facebook Page.

c) The local Police Neighbourhood Inspector had given details of a Neighbourhood Policing Survey. He hopes that local residents will complete the survey and give their views on this important topic. A copy is attached to these Minutes.

13. DATE OF NEXT MEETING: The next meeting fixed for **TUESDAY 19 AUGUST 2025 7 pm**

The meeting closed at 8.20 pm.